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Republicans on War and Peace

CAREFUL READING of the resolutions adopted in Chicago by the Republican National Committee fails to reveal conclusive proof that the party has abandoned isolationism to the extent indicated by the headlines. It is difficult to see how recognition that "our nation has an obligation to assist in bringing about of understanding, comity and cooperation among the nations of the world" necessarily implies anything more than setting up a new League and then withdrawing as we did twenty years ago. The statement does not, of course, square with isolationism either, but compared with Mr. Willkie's original version about America's "just and reasonable international responsibilities," it hardly goes beyond drawing up the peace treaty. Not too much store can be set by party platforms, anyhow, and the adoption of so mild a plank today would hardly prevent a modern Cabot Lodge from drawing the country back into her shell—especially after a long war. On the other hand the phraseology is so general that this plank might conceivably serve as a springboard for impelling the country for the first time into the field of genuine international polity.

That the second point in the committee resolution was somewhat watered down from the Willkie phrase of "absolute and irrevocable victory over each and every one of our enemies" is a happier development. But the emphasis on the complete victory of the United States and her allies, whatever the cost, strengthens doubts that these Republicans have given much if any thought to the vital problems of the peace. Here again the terms are not specifically defined but the emphasis is there. Such phrases as "complete victory . . . peace with victory . . . we will never entertain any proposals of peace until such victory be won," when considered directly after each other, as they are presented and therefore in their cumulative effect, once the tide has turned could well lead to senseless protraction of the slaughter. How could a sound international structure result from such a victory? How, for instance, can the Germans be expected to turn against their nazi leaders to compass the downfall of Hitler and prepare their country for a rôle in a new international system if they have to choose between sticking to the nazis, come rack come rope, or resigning themselves to complete subjugation from without, if not national extinction? Herr Goebbels knows this well and hammers home the choice before the Germans: victory with Hitler or absolute extinction. Can the Republicans so soon have forgotten the important rôle played by the fourteen points in winning the last war? Or to go beyond the immediate task before us, do they really believe that once the tide has turned there is no point beyond which there is only needless exhaustion of the riches of the earth, destruction of human life and violation of moral values—a point beyond which prolongation of the war will make the setting up of institutions for establishing a just and lasting peace that much more unachievable?

Neither Administration nor opposition have much to say, yet, about the post-war world or America's rôle in it. We seem to be neglecting one of our most powerful weapons for the winning of the war. Recognition of the importance of this factor is indicated in the existence of the Office of Facts and Figures, the Army's Department of Psychological Warfare and so on, but the United Nations must bring home to the peoples of the world something more dramatic and more tangible than the Atlantic Charter if we are to hope that internal collapse will hasten our victory. We need to set forth a new fourteen points and then see to it that the peoples of the world never have a chance to forget them.

Laval II

THE CONDITION in which the French people were placed by their defeat, but even more by the attempt which their leaders made after that defeat to preserve France in an impossible neutrality, is now clearly tragic. Pétain believed that the armistice had fixed stable limits within which France could attempt to live while a war continued to be waged throughout the entire

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world. Laval, more intelligent and more realistic, knew that the armistice was a first step toward collaboration and that this collaboration must fatally be intensified until France was brought into the new order.

On April 20 France officially cast her lot with that of this new Europe. Officially France withdrew from the group of nations to which she was allied, while still unconquered, to which implicitly and by all the traditions of her people she was bound even after defeat; she limited her vision to Europe and she chose complete and voluntary integration within that system which holds now all Europe save Russia in subjection. Officially France has yielded to the temptation of European unity. It was naturally Pierre Laval who expressed the fateful choice. He spoke to the French people and he shamed that people by speaking deliberately venomous lies concerning the ally that France was compelled to abandon, but he exposed, also, with entire clarity a basic and intelligible thesis for collaboration.

Frenchmen, Pierre Laval said, be intelligent! You cannot keep on fighting Germany for generation after generation. You cannot survive, you cannot hope for any stability in a Europe prisoner of inherited antagonisms. Conveniently, and with some aspects that "will awake in the minds of some of you certain superficial reticences," Germany has provided a system under which the unification of Europe becomes possible. Your future happiness, your hope of maintaining "national characteristics," depend on your entering that system. It is called national socialism.

To such reasonable discourse the tragic and insuperable objection lies only in the nature of the system. Had we not long since judged it to be intolerable we would not now be at war.

The Voluntary Method

ECONOMISTS will undoubtedly differ as to the merits of the voluntary bond-buying plan whereby Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau announces he will seek to enlist an additional tenth of the nation's gross income in the war effort within a year. Quotas to be announced in May will aim to "spread" this 10 percent by adjustment among those whose incomes cannot yield that much surplus buying power and those who can buy a good deal above the average mark. It may very well turn out to be true that the double purpose of curbing inflation and securing the sinews of war will have to depend on something more resolute and drastic than an informal quota system of purchasing stamps and bonds which is implemented only by the free will of the purchaser. But it is very desirable, just the same, that Mr. Morgenthau's plan get a fair trial. The idea is agreeable in itself to people constitutionally and temperamentally free who suddenly find themselves in the strait-jacket of all the war legislation that no one doubts is necessary; if there is a legitimate chance anywhere for a spot of counterbalancing informality, flexibility, freedom, that chance should be explored. It is healthy to have such balance—when we can get it. If volunteer effort really does ring the bell to this gigantic extent (the Treasury announces as the 1942 goal a rough figure of about eleven billion dollars), it will have an incalculably tonic effect on the national outlook and nerves, not to speak of the practical effect on the national budget. But even if it falls short of its projected result, certain valuable results can be predicted: the government will have a clear mandate for legislation requiring higher taxes or compulsory savings or both; the people will have had a concrete lesson in the methods and needs of successful warfare.

Father Coughlin

A FEW DAYS ago THE COMMONWEAL received a letter from a reader, cancelling his subscription. The basis of his action seems to have been our recent editorial comment on Father Coughlin and *Social Justice*. Here are two sentences from this letter: "At your first attack on The Reverend Father Coughlin *who is a priest,* I was rather surprised, but in your last week's edition, I could see what sort of supposed Catholics you are. To say that I always approve his way of doing things, no, but to hear a so-called Catholic paper speak the way you do of a Priest!" As Pius XI so beautifully and poetically described it in his encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii,* the dignity of the priesthood is indeed so great as to inspire awe. "And thus the ineffable greatness of the human priest stands forth in all its splendor; for he has power over the very body of Jesus Christ, and makes it present upon our altars. In the name of Christ Himself he offers it a victim infinitely pleasing to the Divine Majesty. 'Wondrous things are these,' justly explains Saint John Chrysostom, 'so wonderful, they surpass wonder.'" "Thus the priest, as is said with good reason, is indeed 'another Christ'; for, in some way, he is himself a continuation of Christ."

Certainly in the eyes of Catholics there can be no higher earthly status than this, and it is a natural instinct for us to refrain from any word or action which could seem to bring scorn upon so high an office. Yet it is always the *office,* the mediatorship between God and man, which we *must* honor; the *man* holding that office we should always wish to honor, but as Pius XI himself pointed out, that man can suffer a "most lamentable downfall" which in no way will blot out the priestly character, but which remains a downfall and something not to be condoned. Silence also can give scandal.

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Quite apart from the moral lapses which the Pope had in mind is the question of a priest's political, secular action. When he chooses to act in these realms, he abstracts himself from the field peculiarly reserved for his sacerdotal office. He begins to fulfill the functions of an ordinary citizen, and becomes subject to precisely the same sort of criticism as an ordinary citizen. For him, or for any Catholic, not to understand this, to make use of the priestly character as a shield to ward off criticism of secular, political action is grievously to affront that priestly quality.

The matter boils down to this: it is most certainly not licit for a Catholic in any way to impugn the sacerdotal quality; criticism of a priest as a man—that is, on purely moral grounds—is licit, but should be exercised only after profound reflection and with a full willingness to be personally responsible for all it implies; criticism of a priest who of his own accord has entered into the arena of public affairs is not only licit, it is as much an obligation—particularly in a democracy—as is all political criticism.

In the case of Father Coughlin the matter is complicated by the fact that he himself does not clearly distinguish between one level of action and another. When he is most the politician, he most assumes in his rhetoric the appearance of giving religious instruction. He is a past master of the art of confusing issues. He delights in posing as the "best friend" of the Jews. It is essential that Catholics be not led astray by this muddying of the waters.

On April 20 Father Coughlin made a statement to the press one paragraph of which is here reproduced for the record: "Time and again I have said, and here repeat, that I am neither the editor, publisher nor owner of *Social Justice Magazine*. However, I do here and now publicly state that I, Father Charles E. Coughlin, pastor of the Shrine of the Little Flower, alone am responsible for and do control the magazine, its policies and contents. This sole responsibility and control over the policy-making and content of the magazine I have exercised personally and officially by my effective moral and spiritual influence and direction over the editors, publishers and owners of *Social Justice*." The key phrase in this extraordinary statement is "my effective moral and spiritual influence and direction." By its means we are given a picture well calculated to confuse the unwary: a picture of a priest exercising his sacerdotal and teaching function in order to put his stamp upon a magazine the essential intent and effect of which is political, not religious.

A few hours after Father Coughlin made this statement, the Detroit Chancery gave to the press the text of a letter he had written on May 16, 1940. "May it please Your Excellency: Due to reasons which in my judgment are substantial, I will not be responsible for *Social Justice Magazine* beyond the issue of the date of May 27, 1940. Already I have informed Social Justice Publishing Corporation of my decision through the medium of a copy of this letter." From these two documents only two possible inferences can be drawn. Either the 1940 letter was written by the priest deliberately to mislead his own Archbishop, or it was written in good faith and then the priest repented of his decision and neglected to inform his Archbishop of his change of mind. In either case the documents of record indicate action which comes perilously close to lying or faithlessness, to one of those lamentable downfalls referred to by the late Pope.

But now the situation is rendered even more difficult by the official "line" taken in the last issue of *Social Justice* allowed through the mails (April 13) and which the priest himself has since attributed to the exercise of his own moral and spiritual influence. Rather than formulate any criticisms or accusations, I merely quote a few sentences—including a disclaimer of irreverence—from the leading article and from a "column."

> *He stirreth up the multitude! Thou art no friend of Caesar's! He consorteth with sinners! He blasphemeth! What further need have we of witnesses? This man says He is the Christ!—Away with Him! Crucify Him!* The above are some of the charges with which the Sanhedrin, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians—and scribes—slandered Jesus Christ. . . .
>
> Far be it from us to compare Father Coughlin with Christ, but a Catholic priest in good standing is an *alter Christus*—another Christ—as all Catholics are taught. And Father Coughlin is a Catholic priest in good standing. . . .
>
> *Social Justice* need not hold any brief for Father Coughlin. We, the editorial staff, know that he can take care of himself when the proper time arrives to do so. Nor do we make any effort to challenge the Marxian mouthings of a modern Caiphas who, last Holy Week, was intent on crucifying Father Coughlin not with iron nails to a cross of wood but with the invisible nails of sacrilegious lies to a cross of social shame. The risen Father Coughlin will answer for himself, if the courts of this land will summon him to trial. . . .
>
> *Away with Coughlin—give us Browder!* the pro-Communist rabble shouted in newspapers and magazines . . .
>
> It was all startlingly parallel to the cry of the same enemies of God more than 1,900 years ago: *"Away with Christ—give us Barabbas!"*
>
> HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

The Douanier Rousseau

By M. A. COUTURIER

THE GENTLEMEN in full dress, the ladies covered with real pearls, the baker's dozen of artists—also real—who, until the hour of midnight, filed past the paintings of the Douanier Rousseau at the opening of the current exhibition arranged by the Museum of Modern Art,* paid

*Readers who cannot see this exhibition can obtain much of its substance from "Henri Rousseau" by Daniel Cotton Rich (Museum of Modern Art, $2.00), which contains 52 fine plates.

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tribute by their respect to the genius and glory of that "modest functionary of the city of Paris." They thus consummated a dream the fulfillment of which he, at least, never doubted: he knew that he was one of the greatest painters of his time and that some day he would be recognized as such. All that proved needful was the passage of those years which mankind seems so generally to require before it will acknowledge or canonize its heroes.

This inescapable worldly tribute, moreover, supplies the ultimate reason for disagreeing with Edward Alden Jewell, who wrote in the New York *Times* (March 18) on "the strange case of Henri Rousseau, the little French customs officer. . . ." What strangeness does he find in this case? Quite the contrary, we are here face to face with the most normal type, the most simon-pure specimen of a true artist.

His life, with its love affairs, its endless bewilderments, its troubles with the law, seems lifted straight from the pages of Courteline. That admirable masterpieces of wisdom and restraint should have been born from such a grotesque life is nothing to astonish us, but something to remind us of the almost inevitable price paid for certain achievements in human art. As Henri Bergson put it, "From time to time, rarely, and by happy accident, men come into being whose senses and consciousness stick less closely to life. Nature has forgotten to anchor their faculty of perception to their faculty of action . . . such men are artists." Certainly, it is obvious enough that the Douanier's senses are very little glued to life.

His ideas on art and on works of art were as preposterous as they could be, his philosophy was the most absurd—his tastes did him no honor: for him the whole worthiness of painting lay in its copying nature. He had very little regard for Cézanne, and used to say that he, Rousseau, could easily "finish all his pictures for him." He had the greatest respect for the work of Bougereau, and this painter's death was his cruel loss. But when this fantastic creature, his head stuffed with prejudices and far-fetched ideas, took up paints and brushes, the purest, the most exacting beauty took shape under his hand. All this, of course, is most annoying to the Professors and to the advocates of a philosophy of art, but it can't be helped. Fine painting is not born from fine principles and fine ideas. It is the result of fine eyes, of fine hands—and a wisp of dream. It is comfort in a whirlwind for anyone to think that by means of sound philosophy one can make a good painter out of a bad: the Douanier Rousseau, with all his silly thinking, was forever working wonders. The simple truth is that great artists think very little. Even is this the case with great poets. Here also the Douanier Rousseau was no exception.

The double detachment from both thought and life, as Bergson stated it, visibly nurtured in him infinitely precious gifts, and above all the gift of poetry. I have in mind the works—by no means lacking in charm—which another French painter at present has on exhibition in New York. By mixing everything together, the theater and life, stage settings and revery, not for an instant does he succeed in conveying to us that feeling of the limitless unknown and of the enchanted dream which the minutely traced leaves and branches of the Douanier at once excite in us. It is because the mystery of the world lies within us much more than in things. This mystery, like the fall of night, every day overtakes certain hearts—or, better, this night surges up in them, daily renewed.

It is his own particular bewitchment which the Douanier succeeds in casting upon us, and he succeeds because he is a very great painter. Indeed it would be foolish to believe that the man's pure and very profound poetry was expressed in his subjects, in his poetic themes: just like the verses he wrote, his tastes and his ideas, those subjects, themes were in Rousseau most mediocre. No, what we have here is a real poetry of paint. I mean that the poetry of the heart here is directly and wholly expressed by the poetry of forms. Moreover, this "poetry of forms," this expression of the intimate realities of a being by means of poetic value in the forms which he uses—this is the very thing which is the language proper to true artists and to artists alone; and in their works it suffices to tell us everything, to reveal everything. Thus it infuses in the somber and slightly sallow canvas entitled *Rêve Dans la Forêt* and in its ridiculous subject matter the austere nobility of some Uccello or some Piero della Francesca.

How in the world did such works of art ever inspire men to laughter, why were they not able to feel, in spite of awkwardness, this grandeur, this constant dignity of style; a greatness so closely linked to the man himself and to the essence of his art that we find it full-blown in his earliest paintings (in *Le Château-Fort* or *La Tempête dans la Jungle*) just as much as in the masterpieces which came immediately before his death? So true is this that you are immediately a little suspicious of those canvases which do not possess it.

Over the branches of the trees the moon is rising in a clear sky. Through the leafy bowers wild beasts stare at us with great, round eyes. Long since the celebrated Academicians have disappeared. Once more men will surmise that these Frenchmen who first proposed and then imposed such naïvetés upon the universe are, in all conscience, not to be taken seriously. As to admitting that such things show forth rather precisely, rather worthily the essence of the reasons for which we today shall fight overseas . . .

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Manon

Some account of the author's step-daughter, to whom is dedicated the forthcoming "Song of Bernadette."

***By* Franz Werfel**

I WAS not Manon's father. And yet, Manon was my child. Our association endured throughout her life. She was barely a year old when I saw her for the first time. Even then she had long, dark, lustrous hair. She could not yet talk. But when she was asked: "How does a dog bark?" she made "Bow-wow," and similarly "Trot-trot" when the inquiry dealt with a horse. As we stood beside the little lattice-work bed, I said to her mother: "What a lovely child you have. . . ." Manon looked at me with tranquil eyes, which even then held a gleam of observation. . . .

Later her mother became my wife. The three of us lived together. I was not Manon's father. But she became my child.

The little girl must have been about five years old, when we first discovered her talent for acting. At the time we happened to be in a big city, where one of my plays was to be produced. Today it seems to me that the play was as fanciful as it was confused. The action consisted of a motley sequence of dreams. In one of these dream scenes the hero encountered his beloved in a graveyard. "Where is my child?" he asked her. "You stand at his grave," the woman replied.

The dress rehearsal of this pretentious play took five hours. Since we did not care to leave Manon alone in the hotel, we had taken her along to the theater, bedding her down on the divan in one of the boxes, where we hoped she would soon fall asleep. She did not sleep a wink—not even during the long intermissions. Before the play ended, she grew so pale that my wife was alarmed. Despite the little girl's wild screams of protest, my wife gathered her up and quickly took her home.

Time and again during the ensuing weeks we surprised her acting out the graveyard scene from my comedy, costumed in whatever wraps she could find. Dramatically stretching out her little hand, she tirelessly repeated question and answer: "Where is my child?"—"You stand at his grave!"

"Why don't you pick out one of the brighter spots?" I asked her. "There are a whole lot of funny places in the play."

"I don't like the funny places," said the five-year-old. "I only like the sad places. They're much more beautiful."

My profession, with its rehearsals and stage performances, constantly kept Manon in touch with the theater. Despite the motion picture, the theater continues to exert an irresistible fascination on all imaginative children. Vain parents often confuse mere aping with true talent and vocation. We were not so vain as that. Seven years passed before I recognized one day to my own surprise that within Manon there lay hidden a truly creative personality, struggling for expression.

I had always been an ardent admirer and prophet of Giuseppe Verdi. The great master of Italian music wrote some thirty operas, of which but seven or eight are well known. Yet dramatic power and melodic beauty of a high order dwell in all of them. With the aid of my wife, herself a musician, I unearthed a number of these less well known Verdi operas, revising the text and the dramatization. One of these was *La Forza del Destino,* "The Force of Destiny." Destiny herself smiled upon "The Force of Destiny." The brilliant première at the Dresden State Opera House was enthusiastically received. Manon, now twelve, was of course present, not only on the first night but also at many of the final rehearsals. Her little face was no longer pale. It was flushed. . . . She knew the whole text by heart.

In the summer we lived in a little house in the Austrian mountains. Manon had a little companion, a plump girl friend, utterly impervious to the arts. All day long she was compelled to listen to "The Force of Destiny." I do not recall who first suggested that I arrange a performance of the opera's main scenes with the children. Since then fifteen years have passed. But I can never forget those days of preparation, when I drilled Manon in her rôle—or, rather, rôles, for she played several. I do not think that any director, encountering for the first time a sensitive, flexible talent, could have felt a greater joy than I did then.

There were a few costumes in the house, left over from masquerade parties. Manon was to play the male lead, a Spanish officer who later turned into a monk. I selected a rococo tailcoat for her, with tiny openwork shoes and a dress sword. The monk's cassock was specially tailored.

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The porch was transformed into a stage. The spectators sat down below in the open. They included theatrical people, and one and all were no less amazed at twelve-year-old Manon than I. She moved with freedom and matchless grace in her costume. She lost herself wholly in the character she portrayed. There was something profoundly moving in her husky child voice. She actually succeeded at times in making us forget the unintentional comedy of her partner, the plump little girl. When she knelt down in the monk's scene, begging her enemy's forgiveness, I forgot that she was a child—my child—and felt a surge of deep emotion.

From that day on it was virtually agreed between ourselves—my wife and myself—that Manon was born for the theater and would certainly go on the stage. It came to be so much a matter of course, especially for me, that we did not even talk a great deal about it. We did not dream that the youthful performance of "The Force of Destiny" was to remain Manon's only stage appearance.

In creative respects, Manon was curiously disappointing to us during the next few years. She had grown into a surpassingly beautiful young girl, quite tall, very delicate and unusually long-limbed. Flouting the current fashion, her hair hung to her waist. Despite her old predilection for pathetic tragedy, a sense of humor had crept into her nature, often rising to sharp mockery. She had a keen eye for people. But her passion for recitation and action seemed to have subsided more and more. I was about to conclude that in Manon's case too it had been merely the usual enchantment which the theater exerts on imaginative children, and nothing more serious than that. It never occurred to me that the reason might lie in a retreat from vehement expression—the reluctance to bare one's inner self that assails all sensitive natures in adolescence. Manon seemed to us to have become quite superficial. One could have thought that she was interested in nothing except clothes. For hours at a time she pored over fashion designs. "Unfortunately she lacks concentration," we used to say of her. The tall young girl did, indeed, often show a flabby, yielding weakness that was at opposite ends from the child's one-time dramatic passion.

On rare occasions, when Manon felt unobserved, she used to sing in her room. This happened so infrequently that I myself heard her true singing voice only two or three times. It was a full-blown soprano voice, with an astonishing volume in the higher registers. But when we invited Manon to sing with us, the lovely soprano vanished, and in its place a shrill, thin little girl's voice issued from her constricted throat. All pleading was in vain—"I just can't." In the end there were generally tears.

The stage and acting were forgotten. Instead, strange interests of a different kind had suddenly come to the fore. Manon exhibited an almost morbid affection for animals—or so at least it appeared to me. She seemed to love snakes above all other animals—a thing I could not understand at all. Once we killed a large snake in our own garden, and for several days Manon was disconsolate. . . .

The theater returned to the scene by the merest chance, when Manon was already in her eighteenth year. She happened to see Max Reinhardt one night. Reinhardt is the greatest clairvoyant for dramatic talent imaginable. It is quite unnecessary for anyone to read or recite for him. Max Reinhardt told Manon: "I intend to produce the 'World-Theater' by Calderon-Hofmannsthal shortly. I should like you to play the First Angel in the play."

The First Angel in *El Teatro del Mundo* is a rich and important part. I regarded it as a futile —indeed, a dangerous—experiment to entrust such a rôle to an utterly inexperienced young thing who had as yet learned nothing——who had never even been on the stage. Today my only consolation for this blunder is the fact that nothing came of the production of this particular play.

Manon seemed unaffected by my stern "No." Easter was not far off. We always went to Venice for Easter. Manon was madly in love with Venice. I had just come from Italy and was little inclined to return there. But Manon told a maid verbatim: "I think I shall die if I don't get to Venice this year." The maid promptly reported the utterance to my wife, who was somewhat astonished at these extravagant words of her otherwise so reserved daughter. We went to Venice. There the force of destiny caught up with us and Manon.

Italy was a totalitarian country. The newspapers were permitted to print nothing about the epidemic that was ravaging Venice. In the week after Easter Manon fell ill of infantile paralysis. It was a very severe attack—a dreadful case. During one hour of unimaginable horror Manon's breath stopped for minutes at a time, and we had already given her up as lost. It was a death before death. Manon had to die twice in her short life.

When the doctors told us that the immediate danger had passed, we took Manon home to Vienna with the greatest difficulties. We consulted a great specialist, and one day, when I was alone with him, I asked him to give me the whole truth. Since I was not Manon's father, he gave it to me without a moment's hesitation. "Experience shows," he said, "that despite all modern remedies improvement in such cases is utterly illusory. Unfortunately, your step-daughter will never be able to walk again. It is sheer luck that the use of her arms and hands has been restored to her."

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I was doubly stupefied by this truth, because I kept it to myself, telling my wife nothing. The physician had called my attention to one other matter. The patient must be treated with the greatest understanding and solicitude. Paralytics were often seized by distrust, melancholia and deep despair.

Nothing of this nature could be noticed in Manon. She lay there, lovelier than ever. Her cheeks had grown fuller. She was in her nineteenth year. She was a full-blown woman. Looking at her, no one could have credited the doctor's prediction. True, her face betrayed an entirely new kind of superiority—sometimes, indeed, a trace of austerity. What could it be? Did she know the truth—or guess it? All conversation in her presence expressed the most confident hope, indeed, the certainty, of swift recovery. She entered into this spirit completely. I was never quite able to make out whether she shared our hope or whether she was aware of the truth.

Manon's closest friend was studying to be an actress in Vienna's best known dramatic school. She came every day, told of her work and consulted with Manon. Perhaps that furnished the outward impetus. At any rate, from a certain day on I noted a new serenity in our patient, a strange air of illumination. We had asked a mutual friend, who had made his mark as a teacher of dramatics, to give her lessons. Now she was carried to a remote room whenever the teacher appeared, which was every day. She did not want it known or talked about. Her dramatic lessons were to remain a secret. We asked no questions. We ignored the whole matter. But I still see Manon before me, stretched out in bed, motionless, her cheeks flushed, studying dramatic parts for hours on end. Whenever someone entered, she hid the book. The old passion had returned. Her studies were interrupted only when she opened her beloved zoology set to the chapter on reptiles before going to sleep.

Months passed in this fashion. The strange translucence in Manon's features was heightened. Her life seemed to be full to the brim, as happy as though she were not at all waiting for the future the old physician had pitilessly projected—the future of a wretched cripple. On Palm Sunday she had us called into the room that was usually the scene of her well concealed dramatic instruction. "I shall do some acting for you today," Manon said with a smile. Her teacher seemed to be more excited than she. As always, the frail figure was seated in a deep upholstered chair. Her black hair, parted in the middle, fell over her narrow shoulders. Her long hands rested in her lap. Manon began to speak, to act. . . .

She recited the famous monologue from Schiller's "Joan of Arc." She played two scenes of Shakespeare's Viola. She concluded with a dialect scene from a humorously sentimental popular play. Since her paralysis permitted her little freedom of action, the full power of her interpretation lay in her speech, her voice, the expression of her eyes, the twitching of her mouth, her smile, a few frugal gestures of her hands. Yet it was precisely this limitation that ineffably, inimitably highlighted the girl's creative achievement. Her husky voice vibrated, her eyes lighted up and died, her lips opened questioningly, her hands fluttered. . . . From the waist down all was rigid. I do not believe that my love and my sorrow have overvalued this hour. Nor did I need the amazement and shock exhibited by the great actor who heard Manon the following day to know how great a talent was here condemned to everlasting renunciation. The promise so charmingly proclaimed in the child's performance of "The Force of Destiny" only to seem to ebb away before our eyes—now it had attained fulfillment, across the mortal handicap of disease. No, Manon herself had brought the promise to full fruition, by virtue of the earnestness, the zeal, the energy granted to her by the suffering that turns others into intolerable burdens to their environment. She had developed her endowment, knowing deep inside that it was senseless and in vain. It was as though true grace, placed into our souls, could not perish without flowering, even though but once, without purpose, for a mere half-hour.

"You have worked hard this past half-year," I said to her afterward, merely to say something. "It was a very lovely half-year," she replied. As contradictory as it sounded to me, this simple little sentence, said in a dreamy voice, expressed the full truth. The last half-year of Manon's illness was truly her best time. Her soul had unfolded, perhaps even beyond the limits that had been originally set for it. She had won victory over an unconquerable ailment. The inward illumination of her face was the trophy of this victory. It was strange—no complaint ever passed her lips. Never again did she inquire in fear and impatience after the future. She kept on studying her parts, her cheeks flushed, her eyes shining, as though it were but a question of time until she stood on the stage as Joan of Arc or Viola. What a lesson—a lesson that almost defies words—Manon taught us by her pure devotion to futility! The inner light that dwelt in her began to attract people. A great many visited her. Those who had come from pity left in the end with a smile of joy, heretofore unknown. They were like people who had been granted a boon, knowing not why nor how.

On Maundy Thursday there was one more joyous surprise for Manon. A friend gave her two emerald-green ring-snakes, harmless reptiles, the male of which wears a kind of crown on his

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head. Manon was delighted, permitted the serpents to rest on her bosom. I was a little startled at this intimacy. "You look like Cleopatra before her end," I said. "A good rôle," she smiled.

On Saturday she began to die. The central nervous system suddenly failed. The second death excelled in cruelty the first one through which she had passed. It was one of those deaths in the face of which even the most devout are wont to doubt.

* * *

Life streams on. We who remain alive undergo changes. Only the dead remain immovably still in their perfection of character. Barely a day passes during which I fail to see Manon before my mental eye. She sits motionless in her chair, her husky vibrant voice speaking the words of the poets. . . . And a message vibrates in the unforgettable voice of this child. The true power of love, the real endowment of Heaven, can never be destroyed. It thinks not of reward. In the darkness of the maze, at the very threshold of death, it strives into the day with a light of its own.

Parades

A reply to last week's article by Valeriu Marcu.

By **C. G. Paulding**

WHEN they changed the guard at the Quirinal the troops would march up the via dei Condotti, you would hear the band coming along and you would wait to watch the troops pass and when the Italian flag passed you would lift your hat. Naturally this changing of the guard always took place at the same hour and when you heard the music you knew what was coming, you knew that regular troops were coming. But when, in Rome, you heard martial music at some other hour, and when you saw men marching at some other hour, you could never be sure whether they would be fascists or soldiers: when you saw them coming you would turn off the street at the first corner and if there was not time enough to do that you would go into a shop, or into a bar, or into the court of a building—anywhere in order to avoid having to salute something in which you did not believe and for which you had no respect.

When Valeriu Marcu last week marched alertly through some pages of this magazine I felt again that embarrassment to which Rome had made me sensitive. I heard martial music and I did not know what it announced. And when I observed Mr. Marcu's procession I saw that it carried not one flag but three: the flag of pre-war European democracy and on that flag was stencilled—as the fascists used to stencil their filth on the walls of Rome—the word "failure"; the flag of revolutionary courage borne by the men who are paying with their lives to resist and overthrow the nazi domination of their conquered countries—and the flag, stark and spectral, of "those terroristic, warlike elements . . . (which) will be the next rulers."

In a certain immediate sense no word of criticism can be made of Mr. Marcu's analysis of the past, the present and the future. It is true, obviously, that the European democracies were powerless to act in time—or when the time came—to prevent or to halt German aggression. It is true, of course, that they tried to bargain, to temporize in order to avert war. And when they had failed, and after they were conquered, it is certain that nothing is more admirable today than the courage of those men who, against evident and terrifying odds, alone or in groups, fight to break down the power of the occupying forces and who nourish, by their sacrifice, the will of their peoples to live once more in freedom. It is not impossible and certainly it would be just that when the hour of liberation comes these leaders should inspire the task of reorganizing, of inventing, a new and free European community. It is evident also—and this I admit at once—that the war is not being fought to return to power certain politicians now in exile.

But a man does not write bitterly about the past and bravely about the future if all he seeks is facile consent to a certain simplified structure of his argument. For in that argument there are overtones, not all of them merely implicit, and it is in this zone of emotion, and also of fact, that I find myself in radical disagreement with Mr. Marcu. In his article, Mr. Marcu does not choose to remain on the plane of technical political history for the period between the two wars. Very properly he does not disassociate the faults committed by democratic governments from the will of the peoples which inspired these governments and to which they were subservient. As at the Riom trial, he too selects an arbitrary date, 1924,

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and seems to think that the "shallow cunning" which brought all Europe to ruin started then. The weakness in European democracies and notably in French democracy he attributes to a profound failure "in character and spirit." His treatment of France is startlingly superficial. He dismisses the French pre-war democracy with a word or two of disdain for Daladier and Laval, an account of the pessimism of French officers (they were no fools), an account of a conversation with a French cabinet minister now in exile who had reached the reasonable and unpardonable conclusion that Frenchmen were outnumbered by Germans and consequently could ill afford another war. To which he adds a trivial reference to the fact that it was through his deputy that a French war veteran or his widow obtained the license to sell tobacco. I am surprised that, with the extraordinary Mr. Alfred Noyes, he did not drag in Marcel Proust.

French democracy

Europeans have the idea that Americans possess but a short tradition and few memories. I assume that Mr. Marcu's memories of European democracy are many and am therefore obliged to say that his ingratitude is immense. I will not argue once again the case for pre-war French democracy. Since Mr. Marcu proceeds by assertions I will simply assert that nowhere in Europe, more than in France, were there as many men engaged in active and devoted search of the means by which steps forward could be taken to implement democracy. It was the diversity itself of this search and the vigor with which it was prosecuted that produced political paralysis. For where democracy seems stronger it is only because fewer intellectual, spiritual and political leaders, urged on by a less actively divided public opinion, are engaged in the unending labor to form a harmonious and free society. The tension in democracies increases as the margin of possible indifference to public affairs decreases. And with this tension comes the temptation to accept a simplified solution.

In Europe, in the pre-war years, this margin of possible indifference decreased with appalling rapidity. Poverty and fear of war, wealth and avarice, divided men everywhere and forced them to consider every political possibility, forced them to take sides in serious debate. The democratic process was in full activity. It included and admitted the theory that when a country refuses sufficient consent to any proposed course of action that action may not be taken. It included and admitted the theory that when the people of a country refuse to fight a preventive war no such war can be waged. It refused the theory of justification by success.

And so while Italy and then Germany yielded to the attraction of force and abandoned democracy, France did not yield. France was faithful to uncertainty and to division and to democracy.

This fidelity according to Mr. Marcu found its most signal expression in "horse trading" and in *combinazione*. That is what Gayda used to say about the French and he was annoyed also because his own nation had furnished the word *combinazione*. And that is what almost everyone is saying about the French, now that they have fought and lost the war. Applied to French political action, both in the relationship between parties and in the dealings of France with other nations, there is some truth in the accusation. But when you think of real people and their real problems the accusation and the epithets sound thin and arrogant. Is it absurd to have sought *combinazione* which might have saved Europe from war? Was it criminal to indulge in "horse trading" in an effort to save France from civil war? Was it an expression of "sham democracy" when the French finally withdrew from the Ruhr? Was Briand no more than one of the politicians "who knew best how to bribe the enemy" during all the years that he fought for peace? Was Daladier a coward when, remembering Nivelle and all the costly offensives of the other war, he proclaimed the government's sacred duty to see that French blood be spared as much as possible? Were the French wrong in everything they did between the two wars? That has become the partisan leftist point of view. It is not mine.

It cannot be mine because I reject the test of success. France fell and that proves nothing against democracy. But if the French were as guilty and as weak hearted and as corrupt as they are now supposed to have been, then why should I care that their country has fallen? If they did not know what they wanted and were afraid to defend what they loved, why should I not admire the Germans who knew what they wanted, the Italians who knew their greed? If this is simply a war and the strong nations win what they seek and the weak nations are destroyed, let us forget at once all about democracy. But if we hold to the conception of democracy, then this attack on the weakness it has shown is an attack on the conception itself.

The normal life

Mr. Marcu sees animals everywhere—foxes and rabbits and lions. He wants the war to be won by the lions. So do I. But when the beasts shall have done with their carnage I want a place in which men may live again. Not heroes. Men. Men who will go to the market place and bargain, and haggle and resume their horse trading. Men who will have to find *combinazione* in order to exist. Men subject once again to an imperfect state, struggling to improve that state, knowing that there is no panacea either in government by

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tyrants or in government by the "new élite," the "new people of rulers." Mr. Marcu writes: "A European type of anti-Hitler fighter is in the process of formation. The psychology of this new type is unintelligible to conformist thinking. He is a conspirator today, but a ruler tomorrow. His path to power traverses the prison cell, not the corridor of parliament." In answer to four sentences I write one word: Cincinnatus.

Nothing, I am sure, will be more unpopular than this reply to Mr. Marcu. Yet there remains that tragic condition of man's life which by simple people is called normal and which Mr. Marcu appears to despise. It is, as I understand it, to re-enter that normal life that we are fighting the war. For most of us that normal life includes the practice of democracy. And democracy includes, whether we like it or not, many of the elements of weakness which are so repulsive to Mr. Marcu. France fell because of those weaknesses. France had Sedan. We had Pearl Harbor. "Remember Pearl Harbor" means to us that we were not fascist, nor predatory, nor prepared.

Like the French people we possessed a "longing for tranquillity," which Mr. Marcu calls a "fear of death . . . and a renunciation of life"—the life of the hero, I suppose—and which I think is a normal desire. Like the French we longed to be left alone and that desire also is a normal one. Like the French we were working to solve our problems as best we could. These problems pertain to the organization of life within the community and to the relationships between communities. They are the problems of war and peace, of justice, and of the pursuit of happiness. They are the problems which man has had to face always and will have to face always.

There will be no parades when Mr. Marcu's heroes have driven out the invader. The men throughout Europe who fought to free their countries will return to their tasks, with new hope certainly, but they will find that their tasks are the same. As Mr. Marcu says, Hitler will have destroyed wealth, driven out parliaments, broken down a certain exaggerated form of national self-sufficiency. But he will not have destroyed that which is constant in the desires and fears of men, and after Hitler, as before, the same choice will have to be made between that endless process of compromise, slow advance, persuasion, *combinazione* which is democracy, and the false and simplified solutions of violence. Whatever new machinery the heroes may invent to defend their new won freedom will not be too dissimilar from the old. There is a rhythm of revolt, a slower rhythm of construction. The heroes will even have to become politicians.

As for France, there may well be another Daladier—he fought well in the other war—another Léon Blum.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE DRASTIC action taken by the Federal authorities against *Social Justice,* the results of which will be developed by a grand jury in Washington this week, has taken the limelight of public attention away from the strange case of another "national weekly," of tremendously greater circulation and influence, the *Saturday Evening Post.* For a long time past, that publication has been boisterously aggressive in its isolationism, both in the contents of its powerful editorials and in the nature of many of its special articles. That was its unquestionable right, if its owners and directors honestly believed in isolationist policies—but after the Japanese attack and the prompt declaration of war upon us by Japan's Axis allies, isolationism was impossible for any American periodical animated by patriotism, and still even dimly illuminated by political and military common sense. This fact was reluctantly perceived by the controllers of the *Saturday Evening Post;* but it was the storm that broke upon its counting room, as well as its editorial room, after the publication of Milton Mayer's strange article about the Jews that apparently induced it to make what has turned out to be a very hasty and uncoordinated reform of its editorial policy in regard to the war.

Space was bought in the daily press in which to reproduce the new editor's excuse for the Mayer article, which, it seems, was simply a case of mistaken judgment on the part of the former editor. But all this is hardly to be taken seriously as evidence of a true change of heart, or even of a true will to be consistent in a new policy, in view of the disheartening and potentially dangerous article by Dr. Felix Morley, the president of Haverford College, in the April 18 number. In one of its recent editorial professions of support for the national effort, the editorial page praised the patriotism of American youth. In talking about this latter topic, it observed, "Twenty years of cynicism and false intellectualism, which seem after all to have been only skin deep, are being swept away."

But cynicism and intellectualism, that perhaps should not be termed "false," but which decidedly are misleading and essentially shallow, in spite of their surface air of urbane and superior detachment from sentimental views, clearly mark Dr. Morley's essay in discouragement. Its whole tone, moreover, reminds one keenly of the fact that before he became president of Haverford College "Doctor" Morley was the hard-hitting isolationist editor of the Washington *Post.* Now his college chair becomes a forum for the undisguised preaching of what purport to be the "realities" of international economics and politics. But as a correspondent writes me to say: "It would seem as if this 'realist,' or rather this Machiavellian cynic, has eyes only for power politics and materialistic economics." The criticism seems to me to be justified. The deep human factors in the world situation, justice and charity, are unknown—or at least are ignored—in Dr. Morley's

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subtle and dangerous essay. He is essentially presenting a case in favor of the appeasement of our enemies. He seems to intend the conditioning of the minds of his readers to the acceptance of compromise and to the probable, perhaps certain, dominance in Europe of a German-French power alliance which, he graciously allows, may be purged of its nazi character, but which otherwise, presumably, will ignore the spiritual and moral and profoundly human values that are the truly realistic factors at stake in our struggle.

His line is hardly different to the more brazenly materialistic line of power politics advocated by Mr. Lawrence Dennis, and which underlies the "geo-political" fantasies disguised as rock-bottom facts and truths in the fantastic views put forward by Colonel Lindbergh before the Pearl Harbor cataclysm. Such whimsies have their preachers and teachers and disciples, in our country—but they are not representative of what the American nation truly is fighting for. And what we are fighting for is of the utmost consequence and value to tens and hundreds of millions of human beings among other nations than our own. The Poles and Norwegians and Dutch and the Jews of many lands, and the Christian leaders of both Catholic and Protestant peoples and interests throughout all the world—whose religion, as a free institution, is threatened with utter extinction—all are with us now, as we, and they, to the best of their present ability, work and fight for human values. The *Saturday Evening Post* should be rebuked for spreading views so utterly at variance with what our nation stands for.

Communications

THUS SPEAKS GERMANY

Newfoundland, N. J.

TO the Editors: A recent book, "Thus Speaks Germany," edited by W. W. Coole and M. F. Potter, is presented to the public as if it "convicted" the German people out of its own mouth. The technique is neither new, nor has it become more convincing since Lord Vansittart's "Black Record," which met with general rebuke among intellectual leaders in Great Britain. "Books like this . . .," said Mr. R. L. Duffus in his review in the New York *Times* of February 15, "are misguided, misleading and dangerous." Had it not been reviewed in a very different spirit by H. A. Reinhold, in THE COMMONWEAL of April 3, this might have been left to stand as the final verdict.

The pseudo-completeness of "Thus Speaks Germany" is a reflection on the lack of historic knowledge of the general public. Quotations from famous and obscure Germans are piled up over the centuries, without reference to specific circumstances, in order to manufacture an historic continuity of thought on war, aggression, State and race idolatry leading up directly to nazism. The ultimate object is of course an attempt to show that there is no essential difference between nazis and non-nazis, because both groups are Germans. It seems not sufficient, in the eyes of the editors, to be anti-nazi; to escape reproach, Germans are expected to be anti-German, i. e., traitors to their country.

Quotations from Ernst Moritz Arndt, of the years 1803 and 1806, advocating the restoration of Germany's historic frontiers and a war of liberation against France are presented as if Arndt were a forefather of nazi lust for domination. That France at that time had enslaved half of Europe, while German Quislings, the Princes of the Rheinbund, made common cause with the foreign conqueror, remains unmentioned. Baron vom Stein, for calling the French "brazen and vicious," serves as an example of German chauvinism and national arrogance, though it was said on the eve of Napoleon's final bid for world rule, the war on Russia, by the man who was the greatest democratic reformer of continental Europe and one of the main forces in the overthrow of Napoleonic militarism.

Particularly interesting is the chapter "Germany in Defeat," because it contains the editors' maxims for the future. The point they drive at is that *all* German parties, not only the nazis, rejected and opposed the Versailles Treaty. This is so much wasted paper, for no one except the nazis ever contended that Hitler alone was against Versailles. Every German has clearly a moral right to work for the betterment of the conditions of his country, especially as the Versailles Treaty had in many ways violated the Fourteen Points which Germany had accepted as basis for the peace settlement.

We republican Germans did of course not think of changes by force; we believed in negotiations and mutual good will, and these in fact, long before nazism came to power, had succeeded in abolishing some of the most oppressive clauses of the Treaty. Had reason and decency permitted the German Republic to achieve more, there would perhaps be no National Socialism today.

If this book had come out only a year ago, it would, as I hope it will now, have gone down quickly to well deserved oblivion. Then no one thought that nazism was a German characteristic, any more than that the Black and Tans are representative of the British nation, or the horrors of the Lipari or Devil's Islands typical of the people of Dante or Pascal. Every reader of the daily press was aware that the continued existence of nazi terror was a striking proof for the continued existence of freedom in a nation which for a thousand years had been the vessel of the idea of Christian Europe.

Today, some may perhaps feel that since the United States has become actively engaged in the war, the situation warrants a different approach. Yet the same Hitler who declared war on America had for eight years been recognized by all clear-thinking and fair-minded people as the usurper and despot who could maintain his rule over Germany only by terror. The general problem has remained unchanged, namely, that to free the world from barbarism all nazi and fascist occupied countries, Germany and Italy included, should be mobilized against their oppressors.

Books like "Thus Speaks Germany," on the contrary, sabotage the very ideas for which this war is being fought. They play right into the hands of nazi propagandists,

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who tell the Germans that, in Goebbels' own words, "All hardship you suffer now will pale in the face of the inferno that awaits you, should you lose the war."

Last but not least I should like to point to the moral problem involved: to create a hatred which is bound to result in the imitation of Hitler's methods against the vanquished is not the ethos to assure the victory of democracy.

However, I am confident in the sense of justice and objective truth of the American nation, which I have learned to know and to love in seven years of intimate contact. It is that spirit alone, of fairness and international democracy, which can provide the basis for a lasting peace, with liberty for all the oppressed, Germans and non-Germans alike.

PRINCE HUBERTUS LOEWENSTEIN.

The Stage & Screen

Yesterday's Magic

EMLYN WILLIAMS wrote "The Corn Is Green" out of his boyhood experience. He wrote "Night Must Fall" out of his inventive imagination, touched off possibly by a newspaper clipping. "Yesterday's Magic" he wrote chiefly out of his memory of other men's plays. His personal contribution amounts to little more than Welsh names for the principal characters and a Welsh song in the opening act.

It's the play about the celebrated actor who sold out to John Barleycorn. In a squalid room in a cheap boarding house overlooking Covent Garden, his crippled but chipper daughter nurses his hangovers. His lovely young bride, it goes without saying, died at her daughter's birth, and her name has never since crossed the widower's lips. A knock at the door: the new tenant wants to borrow a hammer. A poor but ambitious young artist, is he? Wrong; a poor but ambitious young musician. Before you could say "cliché," with the help of a crusty old admirer of yesterday's magic the stranger finds the old maestro a job; soon he is rehearsing the title rôle in a C. B. Cochran production of "King Lear." But on the afternoon of opening night, a too well-meaning friend lets drop that his daughter plans to marry the young musician on the morrow and sail for America. Need I go on?

Familiarity doesn't necessarily vitiate a play. Life's patterns are recurrent; the greatest plays have a necessary element of banality. But the banality of "Yesterday's Magic" is not the banality of life but of theatrical tradition. Excepting a few inventive passages in the first scene, everything in it is second-hand, superficial and grossly sentimental from the daughter's club foot to the final suicide. The "original" characters—the Barriesque Welsh Bobbie sporting a gingham apron over his uniform and the free-spoken matinee idolatress—are the most conventional of all.

It's not so much a poor play as a superfluous one. The response it chiefly rouses is wonderment: wonderment that in this year—this century—Emlyn Williams should have devoted his time and talent to writing it; that the Theater Guild should have felt the urge to rehearse and produce it; that Paul Muni should have sacrificed more lucrative employment in Hollywood to act in it.

The last is least puzzling; Muni's is a fat part, and he has a good time with it in the first act. John Barrymore would have had a better time, and would have given the audience more fun, but Barrymore would have been driven by boredom to mugg the later acts, which Muni plays with earnest respect. Also, Barrymore would have understood that the symptoms of a hangover are separate from those of a snootful. Muni never appears quite certain whether he is meant to portray a genius or a ham. (Barrymore knows that the two are more often than not interchangeable. Barrymore and Muni both act in the same tradition, known politely as the star tradition; but Barrymore is more self-aware, has a superior sense of humor.)

Jessica Tandy gives a good straight reading of the daughter. The most memorable of the supporting actors is far and away Martha Sleeper, whose makeup, costume, expression and physique are utterly the dim-witted domestic universally beloved of Anglo-Saxon letters. *(At the Guild.)*

Autumn Hill

THE PROVINCE of the quiet, understated melodrama of slowly mounting horror is peculiarly Britain's. Witness "Angel Street" and "Ladies in Retirement." The typical—and successful—American melodrama is fast, tough, realistic. Witness "Brooklyn, U.S.A.," "Dead End."

"Autumn Hill" made the mistake of supposing that New England is England. Lacking the crowded immediate action of the typical American thriller, it lacked likewise the suspenseful psychological—and in most cases pathological as well—tension of the typical English product.

The setting of an ineptly remodeled New England rural home was sufficiently depressing for anything to have happened there. But nothing very compelling ever did happen. A young man printed counterfeit banknotes in the cellar and eventually murdered a young clergyman, but no one in the audience appeared much affected, and the Booth Theater is now dark. DAVID BURNHAM.

That Darlin' Little Man Again

WHETHER or not you saw *"The Gold Rush"* back in 1925, you owe it to yourself to see it now. Charles Chaplin has revived his famous silent film, taken out a few scenes and added some that were made but not shown at the time of the original, has written a simple but brilliant narrative which he reads himself, and has composed the score which accompanies the film. Since its first appearance, "The Gold Rush" has stood as one of the high points in the long line of Chaplin's and all cinema's achievements. Now, the added sound track (with the master's comments and the clever dialogue that he inserts whenever the characters are talking) neither spoils nor lessens the comic effect, but definitely enhances it. And it is comedy that will warm your heart

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with its charming pathos and tickle your intellect with its keen satire. Once again Charlie (Mr. Chaplin calls himself "the little fellow") is the lone prospector whose innocence, utter incongruity, combinations of pathetic whimsy and realism move us to gales of laughter. Once again the audience can forget its woes as it is delighted by its favorite episodes—the scenes with Charlie and Big Jim (how well Mack Swain portrays the noble, suffering type!), the terrible hunger that moves the two men to the ridiculous but touching feast of the boiled shoe on Thanksgiving, Jim's delirium in which he sees Charlie as a rooster, the scenes in which Charlie's true worth is heartlessly overlooked by his beloved Georgia (Georgia Hale), Charlie's dream of the party he gives for the dance-hall girls with that lovely, lovely dance that he does with the rolls and the forks, and finally the slapstick escapades within the house as it hangs over the edge of a cliff—these are all examples of the Chaplin genius, and yours is the loss if you miss them. It would indeed be a joke on 1942's cinema year if the best comedy of the year turned out to be a revival of an old film. But movie makers will have to work awfully hard to beat "The Gold Rush."

I found *"The Mayor of 44th Street"* disappointing—because I hoped that George Murphy would have a better rôle than this when Hollywood got around to starring him, and because the film has a good idea which it completely wastes with unimaginative treatment. George, with the help of Anne Shirley, runs an entertainment business, placing bands and acts. The film treats you to miscellaneous specialty numbers such as Freddy Martin and his orchestra playing Tschaikowsky's "Piano Concerto" in dance tempo. But George is disturbed no end when he discovers one Bitz McHarg is demanding "protection money"—or else. That "or else" means busting up the joints where George's bands are playing. Imagine George's surprise when he discovers that Bitz (Rex Downing) is just a kid—a fifteen-year-old junior gangster! So George outsmarts Bitz. He gives him a job in his office, much against Anne's advice; he takes Bitz to his apartment, treats him like a human. The first thing you know Bitz is being reformed. So far, so good. But a close-up of Bitz's gang reveals that his mob consists of high school youngsters—boys and girls who act tough but who should have been put in their places by truant officers, and might well have been spanked soundly and sent to bed without their suppers. Bitz is later sidetracked by a real gangster-racketeer (Richard Barthelmess glowering effectively as a menace), and all of Murphy's good work comes to naught until Bitz sees light again. The writers are mainly responsible for the mess made of this child-gangster idea. Of course Producer Cliff Reid and Director Alfred E. Green should have realized that they had something novel in this version of the Dead-End Children's Hour. George Murphy does well enough with the reformer rôle; he deserves a better opportunity to show that he can act as well as dance.

"Kid Glove Killer" is a glorified "Crime Does Not Pay" film in which Van Heflin and Marsha Hunt do some high class sleuthing as part of their jobs in the

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homicide department's scientific laboratory. When this town finally elects a good mayor who sincerely tries to clean up the racketeering, he is blown to bits by one of the crooks who is determined not to be exposed. How Heflin learns that his close friend did the murder (I am giving away no secrets; you know it all the time) is the most important part of the plot. Although this material lacks suspense, the business of the experiments used to track down the criminal and the technique involved become more interesting than the story. Fred Zinnemann's direction is better than most minor racketeering pictures deserve. And Van Heflin's acting, especially his swell pantomime of how to cook a fish, is convincing in spite of the B-ness of this feature.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Bloody Prophet

The Valor of Ignorance. Homer Lea. Harper's. $2.50.

"A NATION may be kept intact only as long as the ruling element remains homogeneous. When, however, the political and military power passes from it to racial elements that are dissimilar, and politically as well as numerically constitute the main portion of the country, then the ideal of national supremacy is lost in the endless controversies of internal legislation and petty ambitions."

"As the government of a nation passes under popular control, its energies and progress are more and more consumed in the contention of internal affairs, while the nation as a whole drifts along among Scyllas and shoals innumerable. . . . When the national government becomes subordinate to delegates representing the will of constituencies, then the nation becomes more or less incoherent. . . . An electoral populace is at best a gigantic creation, loud like a demagogue, with the head of a tradesman, and given over to as much self-deception as a woman."

Ask the average reader to locate the source of the above quotations and he will probably hazard "Mein Kampf." It would be a shrewd guess, though an incorrect one. Actually they derive from "The Valor of Ignorance," recently republished by Harper's. Nearly a year ago, radio commentators, casting about for authority to bolster their own predictions, discovered the fervent prose of "General" Homer Lea, who wrote his indictment of American complacency in 1909. Since our involvement, public interest in this bizarre figure has grown enormously, and he has taken his place with General Haushofer as one of the "finds" of the current season. Articles appeared telling the amazing story of this hunchback whose thwarted military instincts led him to participate in the Chinese revolution, win a dubious rank, and return from the Far East with a crusader's conviction of the peril to the American Republic. His jeremiads were not taken seriously in his day. He received some enthusiastic letters from professional soldiers, whose interest in his conclusions can be readily understood. Hearst found his material acceptable in his columns. Foreign chauvinists such as Lord Roberts and Kaiser Wilhelm II hailed him as a comrade. It is even claimed that Herr Hitler found inspiration in his pages. But the vast majority of his fellow-Americans, and civilized people generally, regarded him as a crank and a nuisance.

Is there any present need for revising that verdict? Must we now acclaim him as an American Nostradamus, who saw it all and tried to warn us? Must we turn to him now in our hour of need? To all these questions, this reviewer responds with an emphatic "no." There is no doubt that he had a sound sense of the strategical factors in the Pacific and of certain weaknesses in our national position and psychology. But like most prophets, he is of value only if you are willing to forget his errors. Some of these are beyond his control, such as the emergence of air power; others derive from a tendency to overstate.

As for a warning, we can get enough of that by looking at the latest map of the Far East, without suffering through pages of turgid rhetoric and absorbing painful historical inaccuracies. There is much better background material available than this application of Darwinism to international politics.

In one sense he was a better prophet than is claimed by his publishers: he accurately forecast the mentality that dominated the world after 1918. In his violent distaste for "commercialism," his emphasis on racial purity, his latent anti-Semitism, his glorification of war and scorn of the pacifist and internationalist, General Lea is one of the prototypes of the scourges abroad today. In "The Valor of Ignorance" there is a warning: the thing we call Fascism is deeply imbedded in our contemporary materialism, and needs but favorable conditions to bring it to fruition. Far from being native to certain areas, it is merely the last stage in the progressive breakdown of the traditional philosophy of the West. That is the saddest "prophecy" of them all.

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

BIOGRAPHY

Cesare Borgia. Carlo Beuf. Oxford. $3.50.

"HERE lies in a bit of earth one who held both peace and war in his hands." In his long furred garment, a lean man, a little twisted, pondered in the library of his farmhouse the career of Il Valentino whose

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body lay rotting in that bit of Spanish soil; and, as Signor Machiavelli relived in memory the years in which he had matched his wiles for Florence against the Pope's Captain General, Duke of Valentinois and Romagna, he resolved to arrange his experiences into a handy manual for ambitious rulers. If "The Prince" is not on the shelves of Berchtesgaden, its precepts are well known there. "If your enemy is strong, range yourself on his side—if he is weak, do not hesitate to crush him." "What is deceit but strategy raised to the dignity of a system?" These very modern principles were the framework of Cesare's policy. Macaulay, interested in showing that Machiavelli was a very respectable citizen who must be judged according to Renaissance standards, was struck by the fact that, in his scheme, the good of State was paramount over the individual. Cesare's dream had been a totalitarian state for the Papacy.

After he had secured for his father, Alexander VI of infamous memory, the whole of central Italy, Cesare saw to it that the conquered enjoyed a better government than they had ever had before except under such enlightened rulers as the Montefeltres of Urbino. He acted on the principle that men should either be treated decently or utterly crushed and "since the loss of a relative is forgotten more quickly than the loss of money," he protected private property. There is no doubt that Cesare was an exceptionally handsome and able young man, a precocious statesman, a dexterous politician, a soldier in whom boldness was balanced by guile. He was the first leader to make Italian troops serve to as good advantage as mercenaries, and Italians actually volunteered to fight under Cesare—they were sure of being on the winning side. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Cesare found no amusement in cruelty but when anyone got in his way, he killed him. For women he felt no chivalry. After Caterina Sforza's heroic defense of Forli, Cesare carried her captive to Rome where, in spite of assurances to the French commander, she was soon relegated to a dungeon where she remained till the same Frenchman looked her up a year later. Yet in general, the French were far more wantonly ferocious. Since the luring of his rebellious leaders to their death in Sinigaglia saved everyone months of fighting, the neatness of the "purge" made Cesare the national career man.

Count Carlo Beuf writes with a circumspect aloofness of such problems as the Duke of Gandia's murder, but is scrupulous to point out the advantages of the sudden demise to the younger brother. Alexander VI was passionately devoted to his eldest son and Cesare might have remained in clerical life so long as Juan lived. Cesare's capital was the Borgia prestige, but the only person in the family or out of it to whom he was consistently loyal was Lucrezia. Their own relationship has never been proved one way or the other; Beuf agrees with the modern opinion that she was a dull woman prone to domesticity who loved and was loved in turn by her three husbands. Her amiability even won over the snobbish d'Estes. Lucrezia retired to a convent for three months on Cesare's sudden death. She prayed hard for his soul and he needed it. So did his wife, Charlotte d'Albret, who prayed and mourned for him the rest of her life, but she had only lived with him for a couple of months.

Count Carlo's biography opens no new vistas for scholars or scandalmongers; it is good reading with a capital preface and an unhelpful index. Few men who die at thirty-two have achieved as full a blaze of glory,

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as sudden a fall, as long a chronicle of crime nor as many biographies as Cesare. That he was no Galahad is admitted by the present author, but we think Saint Thomas More would squirm to hear Cesare's fascist schemes called "Utopian."

E. V. R. WYATT.

Paul Klee. Edited by Karl Nierendorf. Introduction by James Johnson Sweeney. Oxford. $6.00.

AMID the fantasticalities of the surrealists—particularly in the New York showings of the last dozen years—at least one real artist has emerged. He is Paul Klee, the subject of this handsome monograph by James Johnson Sweeney, who has contributed the critical text, and Karl Nierendorf, a gallery director who has furnished the biographical data.

Klee, who died in 1940, was a Swiss, born in 1879 of a German father and a French mother. His people on the paternal side had been musicians, and it is perhaps this ancestry which justifies Mr. Nierendorf in saying that his "drawing has a melodic chamber-music quality." Surely it was elegant and suggestive and elusive in only the way that music can be. In fact, Klee at first was a musician, having played violin in the Berne orchestra at the age of ten. But eventually he studied art, affiliated himself with the more adventurous experimentalists in Germany ("Die Blaue Rider"), taught at the Bauhaus, and, after many vicissitudes, was at last recognized as one of the most sensitive color-composers of our time.

He lived retired, he had no ambition in the worldly sense, he sought neither to impress nor to emphasize. He strung his "threads of linearism," as Mr. Sweeney calls them, and then left to the spectator such evocations as they might bring forth. Perhaps it was minor art (on a very high level). Nevertheless, it must be accorded a place of distinction in the modern achievement.

And this monograph, with its intelligent essay by Mr. Sweeney and its valuable biographical remarks by Mr. Nierendorf, is one that is perfectly appropriate to the spirit of the artist. It contains sixty-five full page plates, and these represent all periods of the painter's production. Most notable of all, it presents two reproductions in color which really show what can be done when fastidiousness is allied to good judgment. It should remain an indispensable work on an artist who was as worthy as this tribute to him.

JEROME MELLQUIST.

FICTION

The Edge of Darkness. William Wood. Lippincott. $2.50.

THE war stalks through this novel of occupied Norway, attacking oppressed and oppressor with equal intensity. It does not spare the native squirming under the hated Quisling rule, waiting tensely for English guns. It does not spare the cringing Quisling who furtively avoids his God, nor does it spare the German private who fingers his dog-eared copy of Aristotle and dreams nostalgically of the Fatherland.

It makes the simple Norwegian physician force his daughter to submit to an abortion rather than bear the child of her German lover who wants to marry her and take her to Sweden. It distorts the personality of the frustrated German captain; as an officer, he refuses to let the townspeople decently bury their dead, and as a man, stripped of brutality, he faces the night with aching loneliness, comforted only by the thought that in the

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silent halls of Berchtesgaden a wild-eyed man is lonelier than he.

As individuals, the men who comprise the German Army of Occupation are acutely sensitive to the contempt they receive from the natives. As soldiers of the Reich, they torture an old Norwegian schoolmaster because he says, "I have seen the waves of light and darkness washing over each other for thousands of years, but always the individual man stood in the middle like a rock."

This is the story of the little people who struggle tirelessly to free Norway and ultimately the continent. At times they are thrilled by a stray signal from a British ship that plods through the dark seas; at times they lose hope, fearing that Moscow might be in flames, or that Britain might have ceased to resist.

It is a gripping story, and important because it is both contemporary and objective—the author consistently condemns the forces that motivate the actions of his characters without condemning the characters themselves; he condemns the system of National Socialism, not the petty agent through which it works. And his little people strike at the system through its agents, while agent and Quisling alike find the world they serve an intolerable one.

GLORIA AMOURY.

HISTORY

Our Hawaii. Erna Fergusson. Knopf. $3.50.

THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, with their strange and confusing melange of races, languages, philosophies, attitudes and people, present an odd sort of mixed-up social order—or disorder—unique in the American scene. It is a society hard for the Mainlanders to understand. If Miss Fergusson had accepted the challenge to interpret this life or—had interpretation proved too difficult—if she had taken it simply as her theme, "Our Hawaii" might have been a very interesting, even a significant book, for the author properly went to the people rather than to the libraries for her material. Moreover, she apparently has the knack of getting people to talk and of understanding them pretty well, too. Unfortunately, gossip, hulas, luaus and more gossip concerned her more than the deeper sociological implications she might have drawn from the excellent material she gathered.

It would have taken a good deal more meditation and perhaps a shorter book to draw the complex pattern of Hawaiian life, and, since Miss Fergusson misses the mark so closely, yet so completely, one can only regret that her book falls into another category altogether. She had the material for an impressive and valuable study. She has written another one of those travel books by a person who went to the Islands to write a travel book. As such, it is spicy, gay and readable—a good picture of the surface of things as they were "before Pearl Harbor."

JAMES L. DUFF.

PHILOSOPHY

Regeneration. Denis Saurat. Dutton. New York. 1941. $1.00.

ACCORDING to the views expressed in this little book the social and political ills of mankind are due to defective education, unbridled animality, voluntary birth curtailment and religious indifference. The regeneration of mankind will come about through a systematic fostering of the positive contraries of these evils, the greatest need of all being for a widespread application of Christian principles. Says the author, "It may

SHEED & WARD'S CORNER

Catholic historians of the English Reformation have tended to prove too much and, by failing to acclimatize themselves with their period, have dehumanized and modernized it. Readers of the *Abbé Constant's The Reformation in England Under Henry VIII* know how he avoids these pitfalls and how he has made his immense erudition and sobriety delightfully readable. Volume II: **EDWARD VI** ($4.00), illuminates those great issues that we have never sufficiently understood: Schism changing to heresy, the life and death struggle between Lutherans and Calvinists, the Liberalism of Somerset and the agrarian disorders.

After two centuries of sleep we are again realizing that a Catholic life means intelligent Catholic activity. But the heart of this activity, its supernatural power and its calm daily realism are only found in the Liturgy. *Edward Watkin's The Catholic Centre* is already appreciated as a great, perhaps the greatest, proclamation of this new trend. In **PRAISE OF GLORY** ($3.50) he gets down to details and writes copiously on Lauds and Vespers.

Anyone who knows anything about Catholic poetry and Catholic poetry anthologies has no doubt been disturbed by the lack of order and lack of quality. In style it weakly imitates the more talented pagans, in content it seems to bog in the frosting and never pierce to the core of religion. Readers of **POETRY AND LIFE,** compiled by F. J. Sheed ($1.00) will learn that a body of English Catholic poetry exists, remarkable for its scope, orthodoxy and technical brilliance. The topical headings under which the poems are grouped are not planned as window-dressing, but with a theologian's instinct for reality.

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Restoration — Stamina — U. S. Fleet

GEORGES BERNANOS publishes the first of a series of articles in THE COMMONWEAL next week. Sent from the deep interior of Brazil and addressed to his American readers by the author of "Star of Satan" and "The Diary of a Country Priest," his first article is a message against despair and a stirring plea for defining war aims.

J. L. BENVENISTI sends from London a moving narrative about his 60-hour week in a British defense plant. How Shakespeare has helped him endure the long, wearing grind and what really will sustain a hard-pressed people. An inspiring firsthand document.

W. A. MAGUIRE, Fleet Chaplain of the United States Fleet, who was at Pearl Harbor December 7, contributes some reminiscences of the last war when he was stationed at Brest. A delightful excerpt from Father Maguire's forthcoming book, "Rig for Church."

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sound futile and naïve to say in the present state of the world that the Christian principle of 'thy brother as thyself for the love of God' should also be applied between nations, but very bitter experience will prove without any possible doubt at all that the alternative to at least an honest attempt to carry out Christian principles is universal destruction."

The merit of the present book lies in the urgency of the problem with which it deals: the social and political betterment of mankind. The author is clearly aware of the problem in some of its more general aspects. On the other hand the book possesses serious defects, not the least of which is the superficial treatment accorded most of the issues therein discussed. It is worth noting, furthermore, that although a great point is made of the absolute indispensability of Christianity, there is unmistakable evidence, particularly toward the end of the book, that the mind of the author has been infected with the error, reminiscent of Montaigne, of intellectual and religious relativism. DAVID DALRYMPLE.

RELIGION

Liturgical Worship. Reverend Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J. Pustet. $1.25.

ANOTHER service done to further the appreciation of the liturgy by the monks of Collegeville is the admirable translation of some lectures by the learned Jesuit professor of Innsbruck, Dr. Joseph A. Jungmann, under the title "Liturgical Worship." The lectures were delivered before the institute for priests held in 1938 at Innsbruck; in their present form they are sure to interest not only priests but laymen. Going from the definition of liturgy as the public worship of the Church, the author finds from his study of sources that the liturgy is reposed in Christ, the Christian community, and the ministerial priest: that it is not solely the worship offered by the hierarchy. Moreover, the historical study of liturgy reveals two phenomena, viz., that it is closely related to the beautiful and to popular appeal. Beauty "belongs to it . . . as an attribute of its very nature"; popular devotions should be recognized as "the outer circle of the central liturgical solemnities," inasmuch as the faithful are first and foremost co-offerers of holy Mass.

The author sketches the ground-plan of liturgical services as visible from the earliest centuries, in the threefold procedure "reading-singing-prayer." Then there follow three very suggestive chapters on these heads, with the last divided into a consideration of "The Prayer of the People" and "The Prayer of the Priest." We are glad to find the scholarly author making this distinction between the classical oration of the priest in holy Mass, made to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, and the freer prayer of petition of the faithful, "to some Saint, to our Lady, our Lord, or God Himself"; to find him then pointing out that popular prayer is found even in the Mass as well as formal oration, viz., the *Gloria in Excelsis,* the *Sanctus,* etc. The same distinction is applied also to singing, hymns liturgical and hymns popular. Both, whether prayer or singing by the people, should find their place in the ordered plan of public worship; "For popular song, like popular prayer, is only a preliminary step to the liturgical prayer." This book is worthy of detailed study by groups as well as individuals; it could well be used as a handbook of great value and interest. Thanks to the monks of Saint John's and to their Abbot for introducing Dr. Jungmann to the many clamorers for instruction! RICHARD FLOWER.

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The Inner Forum

Catholic Physicians' Guilds in Argentina

FOR more than a decade there has been an active guild of Catholic physicians in Argentina, according to the current issue of the *Linacre Quarterly,* official organ of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, with eighteen affiliates from various centers in the United States and one in Hamilton, Ontario. In response to the editor M. J. Petty, F.R.C.S., Senior Surgeon of the British Hospital at Buenos Aires and first president of the federation of Argentine Guilds, dispatched an account of their work.

It began in 1930 with a meeting of young doctors called by Dr. Petty. "We have developed on the lines laid down for the Guilds of Saints Cosmas, Luke and Damian in England, by publishing a journal dedicated principally to medico-moral problems, holding lectures, organizing congresses, etc. The first important work we took in hand was that of the medical services for the Eucharistic Congress in the year 1934, when we organized about 23 first-aid stations, with about 100 doctors, 100 medical students and 500 nurses. Our work was spread out over the five days of the Congress, during which we had a considerable amount of casualties to attend to, principally due to heat stroke."

The new prominence given the Guild, or *Consorcio,* by this service led a number of university professors to join and the work expanded. Two or three years ago the Guild organized a week of conferences on the Encyclical on Christian Marriage (*Casti Connubii*). Branches have recently been formed in a number of important towns in the Argentine interior. "Other professional bodies have imitated us by forming guilds (*Consorcios*) of economists, architects, engineers, lawyers, dentists and pharmacists."

The *Consorcio* supplies doctors for a Catholic hospital in process of development by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. It has persuaded the university authorities to supplant the famous Hippocratic oath taken by recently-qualified graduates by a Christian modification of that oath. New members are received each year in a picturesque ceremony following a Mass on the Feast of Saint Luke, October 18, officially designated by "Doctors' Day" by the National University of Buenos Aires.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. M. A. COUTURIER, O.P., is a French Dominican painter and priest now resident in New York. He gives lectures in Baltimore weekly.

Franz WERFEL is an Austrian novelist and dramatist now living on the American West Coast. His forthcoming book, "The Song of Bernadette," is dedicated to Manon.

Rev. Joseph N. MOODY is at present serving as a naval chaplain.

E. V. R. WYATT is the drama critic of the *Catholic World.*

Jerome MELLQUIST, art critic and writer, has a forthcoming book, "The Emergence of an American Art."

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